283 413 the ground. This disc has two hooks to which the fiber is knotted; when the disc is turned by a crank, it braids the fibers into rope. A thick board, smoothed by a metal knife (manufactured by the Indians from iron pieces bought in the city), is used to scrape the pita and remove the fiber.

407 [177] The most complex machine that the Tzeltal own and build is the wooden cane press, which was imported by the Spaniards to grind sugarcane (fig. 6). This machine is operated by two men, who move the rollers by a handle (*kabal-té*) at each end of the machine. The juice pressed out by the rollers drops into fluted containers made of pieces of banana tree, and finally into a pot. This juice is used in the preparation of an alcoholic beverage, *chicha* (*chi-ja*, 'sweet water'), and for panela. Chicha is prepared by fermenting this juice by bran, corn, or wheat, in a special container (*canoja*) made from a fluted tree trunk. The bran or other fermenting agent is *smé-chi-já* ('mother of the chicha'). Some communities (Tenejápa, Cancuc, Oxchuc) have greater preference for this beverage than other Tzeltal groups.

[415] 293 [415] [184]

224 411 [412] A gun has become very common in hunting. Sometimes (Oxchuc and Tenejapa) rabbits are taken by striking them with a coa, after cornering them with the aid of dogs. Blom and LaFarge (1926–27, 2:352) state that the Tzeltal of the lowlands usually hunt wild boar with long wooden spears with fire-hardened or metal points. Traps protect the milpa as well as snaring game.

41 Cooking utensils are mainly indigenous. The usual set consists of clay containers of varying size and shape, jícaras, baskets, wooden spoons, a comal, a metate, hooks, and wooden tripods for hanging items over the fire. In the last few years metal pots, dishes, frying pans, boiling pans, and especially handy *nixtamal* mills (which are gradually displacing the grinding stone) have been introduced. Other items that come from the city are flashlights, small kerosene lamps, watches, scissors, and (infrequently) battery radios.

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